



Cold War Veterans are veterans too . . .

*For those who fought for it LIFE & FREEDOM have
a Favor the Protected will Never Know . . . -anonymous*

The "war time" clause in Michigan's Law excludes 190,000 Cold War veterans from benefits other veterans receive. Their service and sacrifice should be acknowledged by changes in the state statute. This requires our legislators to amend one important Act that defines a veteran living in Michigan.

The statute is Public Act 190 of 1965 "Uniformity of Service Dates." This law does not recognize the service of veterans involved in the Cold War. Act 190 says "Veteran means a person, who served in the active military forces, during a period of war . . ." and goes on to mention WW II, Korea, and the Vietnam Era, and et al. Excluded are veterans who served during the Cold War unless they were awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

The Cold War ended 21 years ago. It was the longest period of conflict, 46.4 years, of the 20th Century. The Armed Forces of the United States were on high alert from September 2, 1945 to December 26, 1991. It was a period of heightened military, economic and political tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. Communist expansion was held in check by our strategic doctrine of Containment and Deterrence. The Cold War veterans were an important part of this doctrine. For example, the Berlin Air Lift, the Cuban Missile Crisis, incidents in Grenada, Panama, Lebanon, and Nicaragua were all a part of the Cold War. In addition Cold War veterans performed hazardous duty in reconnaissance missions where over 200 airmen were killed by communist air defenses. The Fulda Gap in Germany was patrolled for 24 years by U.S. Army units. And the Strategic Air Command flew 24 hours a day in a state of high alert. Also there were many unacknowledged firefights on the 38th Parallel in Korea.

Of the 382 deaths caused by hostile acts, most occurred before 1962. President John F. Kennedy signed an Executive Order authorizing the award of the Purple Heart without a formal declaration of war. And likewise, President Ronald W. Reagan followed with an Executive Order authorizing the award of the Purple Heart following the Lebanon bombing where 241 U.S. Marines died. The Cold War, including its hot conflicts, claimed well over 100,000 American lives.

I am suggesting the "war time" clause in Michigan Law be redefined to mean any person who served honorably in the Armed Forces of the United States. Accordingly, Cold War veterans should be afforded the same privileges and recognition no matter how intense or inconsiderable was their service. In an egalitarian society this is not only right but also the proper thing to do.

It is our duty to include the State's 190,000 Cold War veterans in our veteran community and further acknowledge that their service directly prevented the nuclear annihilation of our Country. The benefits other veterans enjoy should accrue to them also.

It is time to correct a long overdue condition that has, up to now, diminished the service of the Michigan men and women who sacrificed a portion of their lives to keep this Country a free and democratic nation. Our society owes them more than mere recognition; we owe them the benefits all other veterans receive, perhaps more. By amending the above mentioned Law veterans will have an equal claim under all State Laws that are relevant in today's nation security environment. — Don Lotter, American Legion Post No. 7